

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1355

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T TEHRAN 4087

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: EXGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IR, EG, SA

SUBJECT: SHAH ON EGYPTIAN AND SAUDI RELATIONS

1. AT AUDIENCE MORNING MAY 3 PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR TRIP ABROAD, SHAH DISCUSSED RECENT VISIT TO IRAN OF PRESIDENT SADAT AND HIS OWN TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA EARLY THIS WEEK.

2. THE SHAH STATED THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAD COME TO TEHRAN PURELY FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. HE HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC TO PROPOSE. SADAT TOLD THE SHAH THAT AS FAR AS THE RESUMPTION OF MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS WAS CONCERNED, HE WAS QUITE WILLING TO LISTEN TO ANYTHING THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HAVE TO PROPOSE BUT HE WAS NOT GOING TO PRESENT ANY NEW IDEAS OF HIS OWN. FROM THIS THE SHAH HAS ASSUMED THAT PRESIDENT SADAT IS WILLING TO GO TO SALZBURG FOR A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD RATHER THAN MAKING A TRIP TO WASHINGTON WHICH MIGHT SEEM TO GIVE AN ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION.

3. AS FOR IRANIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, THE SHAH COMMENTED THAT HE AND PRESIDENT SADAT WANT TO MAKE THEM INCREASINGLY CLOSE PERHAPS TO THE POINT OF FORGING AN AXIS. IT BEGINS TO LOOK AS IF THE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT WELL DEVELOP JOINT POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA. ALMOST IN AN ASIDE, THE SHAH INDICATED
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THAT THE EGYPTIANS AND THE IRANIANS HAVE DECIDED THAT THEY

COULD NOT LIVE WITH A QADHAFI-TYPE GOVERNMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA IF SUCH WERE TO EVENTUATE. HE DID NOT INDICATE THAT ANY SPECIFIC JOINT ACTIONS HAD BEEN AGREED. IN OTHER WORDS, ONE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS WAS SIMPLY AN UNDERSTANDING IN PRINCIPLE.

4. THE SHAH FELT THAT HIS TRIP TO RIYADH WENT "WELL." HE STATED THAT HE FOUND KING KHALID TO BE AT LEAST NOMINALLY IN CHARGE AND TO BE CAREFULLY GIVEN ALL EVIDENCES OF RESPECT BY SAUDI OFFICIALS. HE COMMENTED THAT AFTER DELIVERING WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE AN HOUR-LONG MONOLOGUE TO KING KHALID, THE ONLY REACTION HE RECEIVED WAS FOR KHALID TO SAY, "PRINCE FAHD WILL EXPLAIN TO YOU OUR POLICIES." THE SHAH'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENTAL ALIGNMENT WAS RUNNING SMOOTHLY ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT SADAT, ASHRAF MARWAN, AND EVEN HEIKAL HAD TOLD HIM THAT THEY SENSED AN UNEASINESS BENEATH THE SURFACE. IN ANY EVENT, THE SHAH CAME AWAY WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT WANTS CLOSER RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND IS PREPARED FOR CONSULTATION ON ANY PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE. HE SAID THAT THE SAUDIS WERE HAPPY WITH THE AGREEMENT IRAN HAD MADE WITH IRAQ SINCE THIS IN TURN HAD LED TO THE SPEEDY SETTLEMENT OF THE SAUDI-IRAQI BORDER DISPUTE WHICH HAD TROUBLED RELATIONS FOR MANY YEARS. THE SHAH SAID THAT IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH PRINCE FAHD, HE HAD HINTED AT THE DESIRABILITY OF DEVELOPING GREATER SOCIAL PROGRESS IN THE KINGDOM. WHEN ASKED WHAT FAHD'S REACTION WAS, THE SHAH REPLIED THAT FAHD RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF PROGRESS AND APPARENTLY HAD PLANS TO PUSH FORWARD. THE SHAH STATED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO READ THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE IMPORTANT SAUDI PRINCES. HE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT WHEREAS FAHD AND SULTAN HAD BEEN CLOSE IN TIMES PAST, PERHAPS THEY HAD NOW DRIFTED SOMEWHAT APART. HE WAS NOT ABLE TO FIT PRINCE ABDULLAH INTO THE PICTURE, COMMENTING ONLY THAT "HE IS A REAL TOUGH-LOOKING GUY."

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